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The Art Gallery

A NOTABLE WATER-COLOR EXHIBITION.

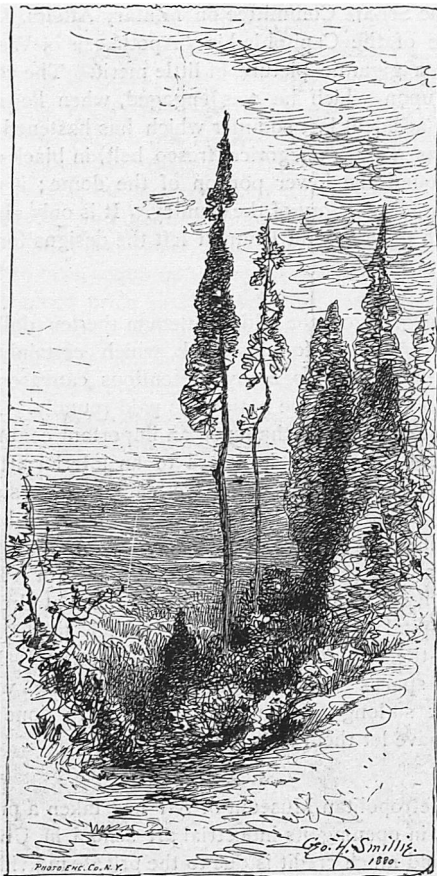


THE recent exhibition at the Academy of Design of the American Water-Color Society—the Society is now in its thirteenth year—was, on the whole, the best New York has seen. Certainly it was very popular, creating a degree of interest among amateur picture buyers quite remarkable, considering how comparatively little attention has hitherto been paid to aquarelle in this country. The greater part of the pictures, of which there were nearly eight hundred, was sold during the first week, and in hardly any case was there any rebate on the prices marked in the catalogue. This catalogue, by

the way, deserves more than a passing notice. It was tastefully printed on heavy paper, and profusely illustrated by many of the exhibitors with fac-simile sketches of their works on view. As the great majority of our readers will have had no opportunity of seeing the pamphlet, we have availed ourselves of the kind permission of the catalogue committee to reprint such of the illustrations as we might find available.

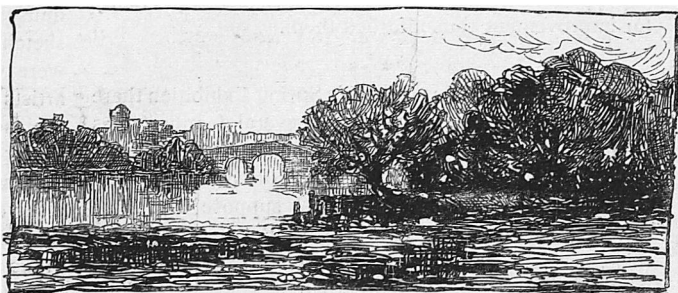
While, among the large number of pictures exhibited, there were few of such striking merit as to be singled out for particular notice, the general excellence of the work was undeniable. There were but two or three large pictures, and none that by special attractiveness of theme or treatment would collect a crowd. There were very few European water-colors, and they were lent by the dealers. The best were "The Miniature," by C. Banguet; a sketch attributed to Corô, and a charming example of Simoni of Rome, showing a lady daintily attired for conquest. Other notable foreign contributions were "A French Soldier" by Detaille—who is not at his best in water-color—and a very life-like cow staring into vacancy, with a girl standing behind her, by the Dutch artist, Anton Mauve. The careful work on the first named, with its minute finish, and the rapidly executed work of the other, which has been freely worked in with a surprisingly few strokes of the brush, afforded an interesting contrast. The Simoni, in its admirable technique, seemed to us to embody all the best qualities of pure aquarelle. We hope that it was

that there were many. The worst example was afforded by Mr. Blakelock, who had daubed in one of his In-



"EVENING." BY GEO. H. SMILLIE.

dian scenes with the vilest substitute for water-color that we have ever seen—a muddy, sticky, and opaque



"MORNING." BY THOS. MORAN.

compound hitherto unknown in the realms of art. It is not difficult to understand that the hanging committee should hesitate to exclude guache paintings simply as such—for the work of some of the most accomplished of the exhibitors, including that of Mr. F. S. Church, a member of the Board of Control, is done after that method—but why such a blotch as this, which is neither aquarelle or guache, should have passed their scrutiny, is really beyond comprehension. It seems to be the understanding of the Society that whatever is not an oil painting is a water-color, although, if we remember aright, there was an exception even to this generalization. Was not Mr. J. G. Brown's "Homeward Bound" (page 73), in black and white, painted in oils? By the way, the artist will

Returning to the suggestion to the gentlemen who work in body color to study Simoni for pure aquarelle, we might say that it is not necessary to go to a foreign source for instruction, for we have excellent aquarellists of our own. There is Mr. Frank Hopkinson Smith, with his "Beach at Seabright" (page 72), or Mr. George H. Smillie's "Evening," or Mr. R. Swain Gifford's "The Border of the Sea" (page 73). How freely in each case the sea, or sky, or sand is laid in broad clean washes, and each picture finished with the sure, decisive touches of a master! Van Elton's

"Morning near Gloucester" (page 73) is worthy of commendation. Compare his "Morning"—a fresh, bold aquarelle—with Mr. C. S. Reinhart's cleverly-composed but heavy-looking "Laid up for the Night,"



which was hung "THE SUMMONS." BY THOS. WORTH. immediately below it. Mr. F. O. Darley's "Summer," too, is overcharged with body color. Mr. Arthur Quartley's handling is easy and effective, and he seldom uses Chinese white except for high lights. In his "Arrived In" (page 71) he has employed it somewhat freely for the furled sails, but there it is not obtrusive. A striking example of the inharmonious effect that may be produced by injudicious use of the pigment was seen in Mr. Henry R. Smith's "Cornwall Moor near Penzance," in which a broad band of body color introduced in the water-course about the middle of the picture had the appearance of being "appliqué." Apart from this, the landscape was one of the best in the exhibition, giving an admirable impression of expanse and distance.

Mr. Samuel Colman's "Caernarvon Castle" (page 72) is a good example of pure aquarelle, and so is Mr. J. D. Smillie's strongly-drawn "Old Cedars on the Coast of Maine" (p. 73).

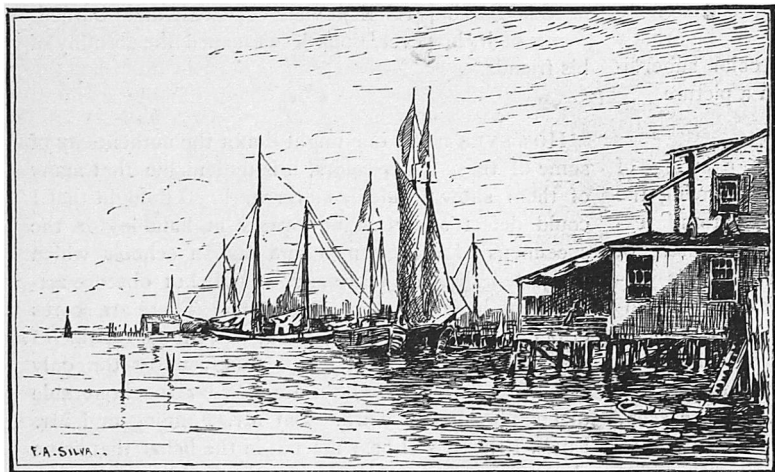
The young ladies in Mr. A. F. Bricher's "In the Woods" (page 72) are overdressed for the country, and their evident con-

sciousness that they are sitting for their portraits gives a disagreeable stiffness to the picture. We liked better his marine "On Dana's Island." His "Beach at Southampton" again is not so pleasing; the drawing is weak in parts, and the surf has a feathery appearance which one hardly expects to find in the work of such an experienced marine painter.

Mr. Thomas Moran's "Morning," admirable for light and distance, was one of the gems of the exhibition. Mr. Jasper F. Cropsey's "Greenwood Lake" is a delightful little



"LOST IN THE WOODS." BY PERCEVAL DE LUCE.



"AN OLD NEW ENGLAND SEAPORT." BY FRANCIS A. SILVA.

studied by those exhibitors who seem to think that any mess of water-color, Chinese white, and gum will pass for aquarelle. Of these gentlemen we regret to say

pardon us for calling attention to the fact that the mariner, instead of having his helm to windward, has it hard to lee, which would throw him right up in the wind.

sketch, full of atmosphere and sunshine. We have here the free, easy dash of a master hand, in which the artist hardly more than washes in his color. "An Old New England Seaport," by Mr. Francis A. Silva, is well composed, but so loaded with body color that, at first sight, it might readily pass for an oil painting.

Mr. George W. Maynard's "Coquetterie," an attractive little picture, elicited favorable notice. We liked better his less-finished "Coming Ashore," a clever sketch, full of movement, and apparently rapidly washed in off-hand. Mr. J. C. Beckwith's female figure, "Scherzo," reproduced in miniature in the margin at the beginning of our article, pleased us rather for its accurate drawing than for its coloring. There is much spirit in Mr. E. L. Henry's "Jogging Along," "Pop Corn" (page 74), by Mr. Thom, as W. Wood, President of the Society, is a well-executed figure, full of character typical of a familiar phase of American street life. Mr. Robert Blum had two drawings somewhat striking for their dissimilarity in execution. "The Connoisseur" represents a gentleman in Louis XV. costume closely examining a vase. It is in the artist's characteristic Fortuny style. "A Fish Stall in Japan," which we might have supposed to have been "taken on the spot" but for the impression that Mr. Blum has not visited that land, is the other drawing. It is realistic, bold, and unaffected, and, we think, the better of the two.



"COQUETTERIE." BY GEO. W. MAYNARD.

Mr. J. Wells Champney's "Boon Companions" treats us to one of his pleasantly familiar genre subjects. Mr. Walter Shirlaw contributed some clever sketches, and Mr. William M. Chase a single

for Life" have made his name almost synonymous with the weird and the dramatic. We must not omit



"BOON COMPANIONS." BY J. WELLS CHAMPNEY.

mention of the clever little landscapes of George Poggenbeck, for they show a master hand, in spite of the modest valuation put upon them in the catalogue. The much-condemned Frank Currier—whose queer "impressions" at last year's exhibition formed a fruitful subject for speculation—was not represented. The nearest approach to impressionism was Mr. A. H. Wyant's "A Morning Effect," which is thoroughly uninteresting. It is to be regretted that so capable an artist should give us nothing more worthy of him than this and his "June



"GREENWOOD LAKE." BY J. F. CROPSEY.

rapidly-executed little study of a negro in gorgeous costume.

Among the landscapes we have yet to notice some of the most remarkable. "Sweet is the Hour of Rest" (page 72), by Mr. Henry Farrer—a soft twilight scene—is a poem in aquarelle. It is a poem, however, in which the artist has taken the poet's license of somewhat sacrificing truth to effect. The picture is large and imposing, and won much favorable comment. In the list of the best of the landscapes may be included "A Warm November Morning," by Mr. J. Francis Murphy; the subject is treated with rare delicacy and tenderness. His "Lowlands, New Jersey," and "Meadows," show the same admirable sentiment. Mr. W. Hamilton Gibson sent three aquarelles, all of them good, his "Autumn at Knoll Farm" being especially notable for the excellence of its atmospheric effect. Mr. R. M. Shurtleff's "Evening" (page 74) is agreeable in color, strong in composition, and is so full of quiet sentiment and repose that it is almost difficult to believe that it is by the same artist, whose grim "Wolf at the Door" and appalling "Race



"OLD PERINE HOMESTEAD, STATEN ISLAND." BY GRANVILLE PERKINS.

Morning." To former exhibitions he was a liberal contributor, and his work gave promise of better things

The proportion of lady contributors this year was unusually large, and, on the whole, much improvement was shown in their work. In the list we find the names of Miss S. M. L. Wales, Mrs. H. Peters Gray, Mrs. S. N. Carter, Mrs. A. H. Barrows, Agnes D. Abbott, Miss E. Aspinwall, Laura Woodward, Fanny R. Thurston,



"JOGGING ALONG." BY E. L. HENRY.

Kellogg, Miss A. N. Laird, Susan Hale, Florence Esté, Mrs. M. P. Thompson, Lucille Clinton, Mrs. Thomas Moran, Mrs. S. T. Bailey, Miss C. A. Northam, Helen Abbe, Miss A. E. Wadsworth, Mrs. Gabriella F. White, Marie Kriesler, Harriet N. Marshall, Ellen T. Fisher, Miss S. Forbes, Miss S. B. Skelding, Fanny R. Thurston, Sara Bascom Gilbert, Miss Fery, Fanny W. Tewksbury, Mary L. Stone, Lucy A. Poë, Mrs. A. S. W. Elder, Mary Cassatt, Miss C. Deming, Miss N. S. Jacobs, and Miss M. B. Benson.

Floral subjects constituted the greater part of the contributions of the ladies. The ladies, however, by no means had a monopoly of them. Having already exceeded the intended limits of our notice, we cannot refer to their work in detail. It may be said, however, that their flower painting compared very favorably with that of the male exhibitors.

Mr. George C. Lambdin's "Roses" is worthy of special mention. We should like Mr. J. August Beck's "The Garden Fountain" if more attention had been paid to the flowers and less effort had been expended on the accessories. Flowers are worth painting for themselves, and in water-color drawing particularly it is not desirable to introduce extraordinary aids to mere pictorial effect. For decorative purposes, in oils, when the canvas is large and intended to be striking, the free introduction of faience, drapery and such accessories is not only permissible, but desirable for the opportunities for color and contrasts of



"AFTER THE RAIN." BY F. S. CHURCH.

texture that they afford. Take, for example, Mr. Chase's glorious painting of still life, recently referred to in these columns, which was on exhibition last season at Moore's American Art Gallery. It was an ideal piece of decorative art. But in a water-color the simplest means employed to introduce flowers as the subject of a drawing the better. Decorative effects are rarely attempted with success in aquarelle.

The exhibition in the Black-and-White Room was especially interesting on account of the marked improvement it indicated in the work of our American etchers. The New York Etching Club was represented by works of nearly all of its members; who contributed a large proportion of the impressions on view. The collection was much enriched by loans by Messrs. H. Wunderlich & Co. and S. P. Avery, through whose courtesy visitors were enabled to see some admirable specimens of Seymour Haden, Whistler, Jules Jacquemart and Otto H. Bach-er. The best of the foreign water-colors, we may add, were lent to the exhibition by Mr. Avery.